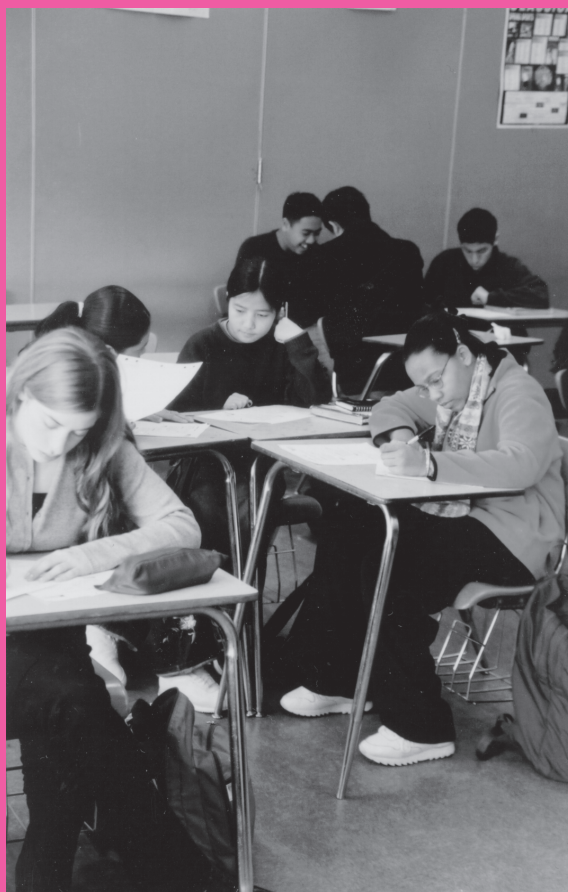
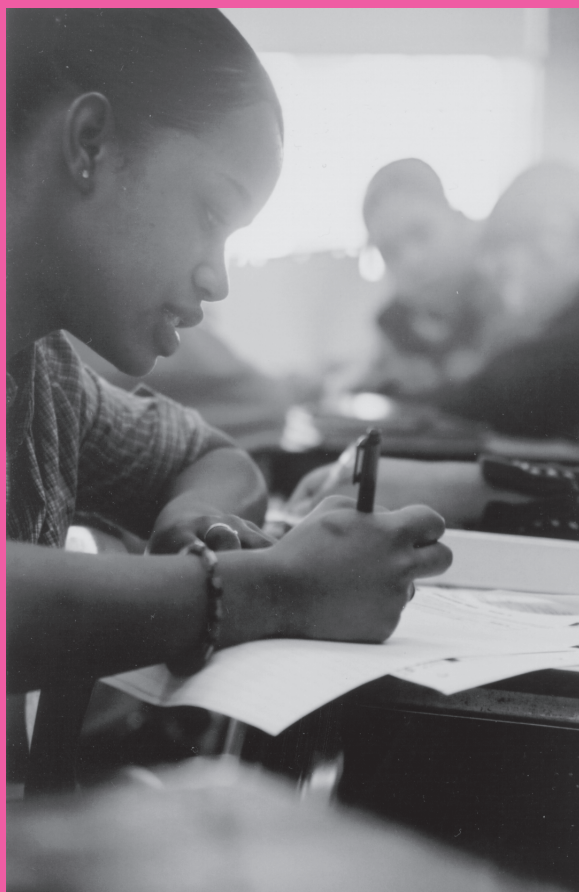


# RHODE ISLAND

STATE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

2001



Writing  
Assessment

**Interpretation Guide for Families**  
**Grades 3, 7, and 11**

**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations**

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for Elementary and Secondary Education**

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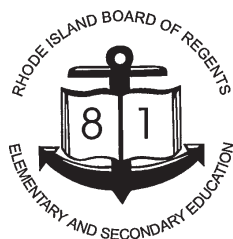
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**Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

*Peter McWalters, Commissioner*

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Peter McWalters  
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
Shepard Building  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

September 2001

Dear Family Member:

This spring, students in grades three, seven, and eleven took a performance assessment in writing as part of the Rhode Island State Assessment Program. An individual student score report accompanies this booklet.

This challenging test assesses student writing performance. It assesses the kind of writing typically found in classrooms requiring the students to demonstrate their ability to write an essay in response to a suggested topic. This is not a test with a "correct" or "incorrect" answer to be selected from a list, but rather a test of writing skills in standard English. So that you may know more about this test, three samples of the actual test, one from each grade level, are printed here. You will notice in the individual student report that a score between "2" and "12" is reported. The score is reported in this manner since each student response is scored twice. So, a student may receive a score of "3" from one reader and a score of "4" from another reader for a combined score of "7." The *Scoring Criteria* guide is also included in this booklet. Please refer to it when interpreting individual scores.

I hope that you find the information in this booklet helpful in understanding the score reported to you. If you have any additional questions, you may wish to contact your child's teacher or the school. The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education is committed to supporting opportunities for all Rhode Island students to demonstrate that they can achieve high standards, as represented by this assessment.

Sincerely,

Peter McWalters  
Commissioner

PM(CYC):mmg

**Telephone** (401)222-4600 **Fax** (401)222-6178 **TTY** (800)745-5555 **Voice** (800)745-6575

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## SCORING THE WRITING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

The “holistic” scoring approach is used in the scoring of the writing assessment. The scoring of each student’s writing, which is a response to a single prompt (topic), is guided by a set of criteria. The guides used to score writing include scores from 1 to 6. **Please note that your child’s score appears in a range of 2 to 12 since every student’s essay is read and scored by two readers for a total score.**

The scoring guides for writing were developed in Rhode Island by educators throughout the state. They also developed the prompts for each grade level.

### Rhode Island Writing Scoring Criteria for Grades 3 and 7

Score	Criteria
6	Presents thoughtful ideas and develops them logically, fully, and clearly; is very well-organized from beginning to end; has a strong command of sentence structure; uses language effectively; has few intrusive errors in grammar and conventions (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization). A “6” essay may be distinguished by features such as making insightful observations, using rich details, or creating an effective scene or mood.
5	Presents good ideas and develops them logically, fully, and clearly; is very well organized throughout; has a generally strong command of sentence structure; uses language well; has relatively few intrusive errors in grammar and conventions.
4	Presents relevant ideas and develops them clearly and fairly well; is generally well organized throughout; has generally well-formed sentences; uses language fairly well; has relatively few serious, intrusive errors in grammar and conventions.
3	Presents some relevant ideas fairly clearly and gives some support; shows some sense of organization; has generally correct sentence structure; uses language adequately; may contain some serious errors in grammar and conventions.
2	Gives some relevant ideas, but they are unclear or barely developed; shows little sense of organization; lacks sentence control; uses language poorly; probably contains serious errors in grammar and conventions.
1	Probably contains serious and persistent errors; is incoherent or underdeveloped.

# SCORING THE WRITING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

## Rhode Island Writing Scoring Criteria for Grade 11

Score	Criteria
6	Writing at this level establishes a clear stance or position and develops it fully and effectively; includes perceptive details, reasons, examples, anecdotes, or other support; is very well organized and provides appropriate closure; shows an awareness of audience by anticipating concerns; uses language effectively; has few intrusive errors in grammar and conventions (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization). A “6” essay may be distinguished by features such as using a range of strategies or engaging the reader by creating a context or persona.
5	Writing at this level establishes a clear stance or position and develops it fully; includes strong, relevant details, reasons, examples, anecdotes, or other support; is well organized and provides closure; shows an awareness of audience by anticipating concerns; uses language very well; has relatively few intrusive errors in grammar and conventions.
4	Writing at this level establishes a clear stance or position and develops it well; includes relevant details, reasons, examples, anecdotes, or other support; is generally well organized and may provide closure; may show an awareness of audience; has generally well-formed sentences; uses language well; has relatively few serious, intrusive errors in grammar and conventions.
3	Writing at this level establishes a stance or position and provides some development; includes some details, reasons, examples, anecdotes, or other support (may include irrelevant or contradictory information); shows some sense of organization that may provide closure; shows little awareness of audience; has generally correct sentence structure; uses language adequately; may contain some serious errors in grammar and conventions.
2	Writing at this level may present an unclear or changing stance or position; selects some appropriate information, but it is barely developed or contradictory; shows little sense of organization; shows little or no awareness of audience; has inconsistent sentence control; uses language poorly; probably contains serious errors in grammar and conventions.
1	Writing at this level presents a stance or position that is underdeveloped, unfocused, or incoherent; may show minimal organization or sentence control; probably contains serious and persistent errors in language, grammar, and conventions.

## REPORTING THE SCORES

Your child's score on the writing assessment is reported to you in the Performance Report in one of five performance levels ranging from "Little Evidence of Achievement" to "Achieved the Standard with Honors." These levels represent the various levels at which Rhode Island children "performed" or scored on this test. In addition, a "No Score" category has been added this year. It applies to those students who were not tested and were not coded as exempted. Exempted students either

- 1) took the Alternate Assessment  
or
- 2) were functioning at the beginning level of English proficiency AND have been in the district for less than one academic year. (For more information, see *Rhode Island State Assessment Program 2001-Requirements for Student Participation and Assessment Accommodations*.)

It is important to understand the language used to describe the level at which your child performed. Refer to the scoring criteria on pages 1 and 2.

# Rhode Island Writing Assessment



## WHAT WAS TESTED

Performance Report For: FirstName LastName

### RHODE ISLAND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

**Achieved the Standard with Honors** (Score of 11 or 12)  
At this level, the student demonstrates outstanding ability to communicate effectively in writing by presenting thoughtful, logical, and well-organized ideas. The student uses language effectively and demonstrates excellent control of grammar and conventions.

**Achieved the Standard** (Score of 8, 9, or 10)  
At this level, the student demonstrates the ability to communicate in writing by presenting logical, developed, and well-organized ideas. The student uses clear language, and the writing contains few intrusive errors in grammar and conventions.

**Nearly Achieved the Standard** (Score of 6 or 7)  
At this level, the student demonstrates the ability to communicate in writing by presenting some relevant ideas with some support. The writing shows some sense of organization and contains intrusive errors in grammar and conventions.

**Below the Standard** (Score of 4 or 5)  
At this level, the student demonstrates little ability to communicate in writing by presenting unclear or barely developed ideas. The writing lacks sentence control and contains serious errors in grammar and conventions.

**Little Evidence of Achievement** (Score of 2, 3, or OT\*\*)  
At this level, the student does not demonstrate an ability to communicate in writing. The writing is underdeveloped or incoherent and contains serious and persistent errors in grammar and conventions.

**No Score**  
A score of no score (NS) is given to students who were not tested and were not coded as exempted.

\* These columns show the percent of students at this grade who achieved each performance level.

\*\* A score of off topic (OT) is given to papers that have no relation to the topic or are not written in English.

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Test Date: Spring 2001

District: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: 11

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

This assessment measures a student's ability to communicate effectively through writing in standard English. Every student in grade 3, 7, and 11 created a written product based on a topic appropriate for the grade level. Grade 3 and 7 students had two 40-minute periods to complete their writing sample; grade 11 students had one 75-minute period. They could receive scores from 2-12.

	YOUR CHILD'S SCORE	SCHOOL *	DISTRICT *
		6%	5%
8		23%	20%
		27%	20%
		24%	30%
		16%	20%
		4%	5%

## REPORTING THE SCORES

## STUDENT WRITING SAMPLES: SCORE OF 4

### English Language Arts Standard: Creation and Presentation of Text

All students will compose clear text in a variety of forms for many purposes.

*Two readers each gave this student essay a score of 4 (for a total score of 8), so it is considered an example of the scoring criteria for score 4. The Board of Regents has decided that a total score of 8 means the student has "achieved the standard" in writing.*

### Criteria for a Score of 4

Presents relevant ideas and develops them clearly and fairly well; is generally well organized throughout; has generally well-formed sentences; uses language fairly well; has relatively few serious, intrusive errors in grammar and conventions.

### Grade 3 Writing Example: Score of 4

Grade 3 Writing Topic (Narrative Style of Writing):

If one of your toys were to come to life, which one would it be? Describe the toy and write an adventure that you had with the toy.

Grade 3 Essay:

I would pick my American Girl Doll. Her name is Kirstin. She has blond hair and blue eyes. She comes from Sweeden. One day she asked me if I could go to Sweeden with her. I said "Sure, I would love to come!" The next day we went on an airplane. Nobody knew we were gone. Finally the next day we were in Sweeden. We saw her Mama.

## STUDENT WRITING SAMPLES: SCORE OF 4

Grade 3 Essay Continued:

Papa, and her two brothers. We saw that her parents had a boat. They took us in their boat on a beautiful lake. It was fun! After that we had lunch. I taught them how to cook macaroni and cheese. Then, for supper we had something that Sweedish people always eat. It was very good! Finally, it was time for bed. Me and Kirstin slept in the same room. The next morning we had eggs for breakfast. Then me and Kirstin enjoyed our last day in Sweeden. We left that afternoon. It was very sad to leave because it was very fun to be there. Me and Kirstin cried on

## SCORING THE WRITING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

### Grade 3 Essay Continued:

the plane. (But not too much!) When we got home Kirstin was very tired. Then the next thing I knew Kirstin was a doll again!

#### ANALYSIS:

This paper is an example of a third grader's writing that meets Rhode Island's writing standard. Here, the writer develops an account of a whirlwind adventure with what would seem to be a favorite doll. Details of the adventure are sufficiently developed to form an evenly wrought, if sparse narrative: doll comes to life, we go on an airplane, arrive in Sweden, etc. The writing is well organized, and a sense of the writer's presence can be felt in a distinctive closing: "... It was very sad to leave ... Me and Kirstin cried on the plane (but not too much!)." Overall, there are few errors in grammar and conventions.

#### NOTE:

Scores appear in a range of 2 to 12 since each essay is read and scored twice for a single total score.

## SCORING THE WRITING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

### English Language Arts Standard: Creation and Presentation of Text

All students will compose clear text in a variety of forms for many purposes.

*Two readers each gave this student essay a score of 4 (for a total score of 8), so it is considered an example of the scoring criteria for score 4. The Board of Regents has decided that a total score of 8 means the student has "achieved the standard" in writing.*

### Criteria for a Score of 4

Presents relevant ideas and develops them clearly and fairly well; is generally well organized throughout; has generally well-formed sentences; uses language fairly well; has relatively few serious, intrusive errors in grammar and conventions.

### Grade 7 Writing Example: Score of 4

Grade 7 Writing Topic (Informative/Expository Style of Writing):

Think about your favorite time of year. Describe how it is different from the rest of the year, and explain to the reader what makes it special to you.

Grade 7 Essay:

My favorite time of the year is summer vacation. My family and I stay at my beach house, located in Tawisset Point Country Club - Warren, RI. It is located on the Mount Hope Bay. We have owned it for thirteen years. We are easy access to Newport; Barrington; Bristol; and Fall River by either car or boat.

This is clearly my favorite time of the year because I have so much fun! The variety of activities include waterskiing, jetskiing, fishing, swimming, wakeboarding, kneeboarding, and tubing. There is a basketball court, tennis court, field, playground, and a clubhouse. The club privately owns many boating docks.

## STUDENT WRITING SAMPLES: SCORE OF 4

Grade 7 Essay Continued:

My average day in Touisset begins at 10:00 AM. I wake up and get ready for tennis lessons. The lesson is from 11:00 - 12:00 Noon. I come home for lunch and get my bathing suit on. Then I may go on a motorboat or just go swimming with my friends. At about 4:00 PM I will take a shower. I will eat dinner and go hang out with all of my friends.

Later at night we might play manhunt or watch the Fall River or Bristol's beautiful display of fireworks. We may even go to a party at the clubhouse.

In the long run I highly appreciate this house. My parents work hard to keep it up. It costs a "pretty penny" to own two houses all year around. If I did not have a summer house I would be bored out of my mind. I would be sitting at a boring swim club in Cumberland. I am extremely grateful to have a house on the water. My family and I have made a lot of close friends (there over the years).

## STUDENT WRITING SAMPLES: SCORE OF 4

### Grade 7 Essay Continued:

My beach house has inspired me to buy waterfront property as an adult. I want my children to have the same opportunity and childhood memory as I did. I also want them to appreciate how much hard work is needed to keep it up.

### ANALYSIS:

This paper is an example of a seventh grade student's writing that meets Rhode Island's writing standard. A clear view of the writer's feelings about summer—and his or her appreciation of fortunate circumstances—is presented in a reasonably coherent and well-developed essay. Organization by way of paragraphs is not very effective, and there are some shifts of focus—but, in general, language is used fairly well and there are few errors in sentence formation, grammar, or mechanics.

### NOTE:

Scores appear in a range of 2 to 12 since each essay is read and scored twice for a single total score.

## STUDENT WRITING SAMPLES: SCORE OF 4

### English Language Arts Standard: Creation and Presentation of Text

All students will compose clear text in a variety of forms for many purposes.

*Two readers each gave this student essay a score of 4 (for a total score of 8), so it is considered an example of the scoring criteria for score 4. The Board of Regents has decided that a total score of 8 means the student has "achieved the standard" in writing.*

### Criteria for a Score of 4

Writing at this level establishes a clear stance or position and develops it well; includes relevant details, reasons, examples, anecdotes, or other support; is generally well organized and may provide closure; may show an awareness of audience; has generally well-formed sentences; uses language well; has relatively few serious, intrusive errors in grammar and conventions.

### Grade 11 Writing Example: Score of 4

#### Grade 11 Writing Topic (Persuasive Style of Writing):

School administrators plan to eliminate one program to save money. They will drop all sports, or computer labs, or the arts. Choose one of these programs and write an essay arguing why it should be saved.

#### Grade 11 Essay:

In my opinion, I'd say that the most important program to a school would be computer lab classes. I think they're the most useful and practice classes a high school student could take.

All throughout the media, you hear how computers and all their capabilities are allowing people to take care of things faster, easier, and more efficiently.

The internet is helping people do their jobs online without them having to leave home. For instance, someone that's interested in buying or selling stocks can do that on different websites. A person can make

## STUDENT WRITING SAMPLES: SCORE OF 4

### Grade 11 Essay Continued:

a living on advertising products they have invented or that they're selling online.

Many people, like accountants, sit in a cubicle all day and type stuff out. Classes like Microsoft Word, Excel, and Typing can give them some of the skills they will use to get their job.

Communication is very big now. You can talk to a business partner on the other side of the world, and save a lot of money on the phone bill in the process.

Architects and graphic designers use the computer to make spreadsheets and blueprints for a project they could be working on. There is a new computer program which allows an architect to draw their building out in a very good quality, 3D drawing. Through a camera's view, they take their clients through the building when it's completed.

Another field of work is computer programming. This job is, and will be, very much in demand. Most people have no clue on this job, but there are computer classes that will give a good base on what to do.

All these jobs and other benefits I mentioned pay very well and make the world much more efficient and easier to work in.

## STUDENT WRITING SAMPLES: SCORE OF 4

### Grade 11 Essay Continued:

The skills you need for them you can learn in computer classes. I asked myself what the pros and cons were for each catagorie, and I thought the computer classes prepare you for a world that revolves around computers all day. I'm sure there are many other good things circulated around computer work, but I don't have enough time to go through them all.

### ANALYSIS:

This paper meets Rhode Island's writing standard at grade 11. The essay presents a developed argument in favor of keeping computer lab classes. Organization of ideas is sensible, and although paragraphing is somewhat overused as an organizational technique, ideas form and flow within the framework of a clear opening and a discernible, yet weaker, conclusion. The various points made are well supported with relevant details. Overall, the piece is coherent and reasonably persuasive. Language is used competently. A few errors in usage can be seen, but none is intrusive.

### NOTE:

Scores appear in a range of 2 to 12 since each essay is read and scored twice for a single total score.